

MERCURY.

Vol. I.

SAN FRANCISCO, CAL., JULY, 1894.

No. 1.

The Theosophical Society, as such is not responsible for any opinion or statement expressed in any article that appears in this Magazine.

Buddhi-Thot-Hermes.

"Dear Mr. Editor?"

There was a big question in the tone of voice. Mr. Editor looked up anxiously. What new demand was coming now? He saw many eager faces around his desk. The little folks had come with a set purpose—"Dear Mr. Editor?" "Who is this Mercury?" "Teacher told us to look at the setting sun to find him. Well, we have looked till our eyes ache and there's no Mercury at all."

"Dick laughs and says, 'tis medicine,'" piped a very wee voice.

"Willie says Mercury's nothing but a newspaper."

"Do show us Mercury."

"We want to see him now—n-o-w."

At that critical moment a sunbeam dashed through the window, leaped over the children, flushing with radiance every soft cheek and flecking every curly head with gold; it quivered for a moment, then shot upwards, outwards and, O marvel, the ray became a youth, bright as the sun; a dazzling vision of youth and joyous life. This vision poised itself on the winged globe that stood on the Editor's desk. A queer-looking cap with wings of sparkling blue and luminous rose fitted closely to his head; winged sandals protected his feet. The vision turned towards the children:

"My dear young friends, do you know me? I am Mercury, at your service. Yes, I am the swift-winged, silvery-tongued Mercury, Messenger of the immortal gods

and teacher of men—Hermes they called me in the long ago, when the stars were young. Aye, I sang this world and many a world into being—I and my wand.”

He waved a wing-tipped staff, round which twined two snakes. As the creatures undulated to and fro the children shrank back somewhat frightened, for they felt thrills running through them and strange music floated around in the air.

“Nay, be not afraid,” continued Mercury, “These creatures are not snakes; they are the World-Serpents, the twin-souls of the Universe. Look at this beauty with eyes of glittering blue. This is the spirit of electricity. It is his breath that carries your telegrams, that talks to you in the phonograph. This other soft-rose green coil with eyes of opal is magnetism. Her breath holds the worlds together and gives them warmth and beauty. These are my servants, and I am thought; the sun-starred skies our home; this world our orchestra, and your brain the instrument upon which I love to play. Aye, we have much to do, my staff and I. Therefore, do not think to see us often, but every month we shall bring you messages, and you can write to me; I will answer through our dear Editor, who will also give you the messages—I shall bring you from the heart of star and flower; from the soul of the Universe; from the angels of love and truth; and the breath of my servants shall thrill you with desire to help one another—to know and to help—each one of you a Mercury in his little world.”

—*Marie A. Walsh.*

Our Mail Bag.

Through the instrumentality of the Countess Wachtmeister we have received, of late, quite a number of inquiries as to the formation of Lotus Circles.

Mr. Sven Ryden, now traveling in India, has kindly sent us a number of little books containing gems from many of the sacred books of the East, for the use of the San Francisco “Children’s Hour.”

A Series of Lessons on Karma,

FOR USE OF LOTUS CIRCLES.

THE WEB OF KARMA.

The Karma—all that total of a soul
Which is the things it did, the thoughts it had,
The self it wove—with woof of viewless time,
Crossed on the warp invisible of acts.

—Edwin Arnold.

Questions.—What is the woof? The warp invisible of acts? A web?

A piece of chintz silk, or damask with a pretty pattern will add zest to the lesson. If there be time some of the children can look up items about spinning and weaving, silk-worms and spiders. The colors in the design may be made to represent different people, the members of the class for example. This plan would show the effect of Family Karma, National Karma, Race Karma. The interdependence of all; the unity of all.

Break but one thread and the web ye mar—

The Greek fable of the three Fates tells the story of Karma; The Earth-Spirit sitting at the Loom of Time and “Weaving the robe of The One” is another.

KARMA AS SOWING AND REAPING.

“Sow an act and reap a habit;
Sow a habit and reap a character;
Sow a character and reap a destiny.”

CLASS GAME.

Write upon a card some act of every day child-life, a picture if possible, and the more ordinary the act the better. Upon another card write the habit resulting from a repetition of such act. Another card will give the habit. Another the character that will be formed from the habit, and so on for the character and destiny. The cards are dealt

out and the game played after the manner of a game of "Authors." Bright children may be directed how to compose like games, tracing the workings of cause and effect. Large outline pictures of sowing and harvesting are excellent for infant classes.

THE WHEEL OF KARMA.

A wheel turning on a spiral plane is a good object lesson of Reincarnation and its Karmic Law. The wheel and plane can be made of card-board; it will illustrate a great number of lessons and will adapt itself to many grades of intelligence. If its spokes run in sevens it will illustrate the races; by making the upright of the spiral a side of a triangle which can be done for any lesson; the wheel picture shows the meaning of the triangle as a symbol of evolution. A horizontal view of the spiral illustrates the Law of Cycles, rhythmic or wave motion.

The wheel of the Good Law moves swiftly on. It grinds by night and day. The worthless husks it drinks from out the golden grain, the refuse from the flour. The hand of Karma guides the wheel, the revolutions mark the beatings of the Karmic heart.

—*Voice of the Silence.*

Only, while turns this wheel invisible,

No pause, no peace, no staying-place can be;

Who mounts will fall, who falls may mount, the spokes

Go round unceasingly.

—*Light of Asia.*

As turns the wheel so turns the world, and all the suns and worlds that look down upon us with their soft twinkling eyes in the quiet night turn and turn; thousands and thousands of turning wheels; and each one of us is a wheel. Think of it.

ADDITIONAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

Rolling a snowball. The ripples formed in water by the throwing in of a stone. The rebounding of a ball. Is anything ever destroyed? What becomes of the fruit that falls to the ground and decays? What becomes of our breath? Of our thoughts?

[To be continued.]

The Children's Corner.

This column will be devoted to questions from children on Theosophical Subjects; and our young friends are invited to send in answers, which will be published with the initials of the sender.

The following questions were asked by children of the San Francisco "Children's Hour" on the Lesson of Reincarnation.

Q 1.—What does the word "Reincarnation" mean?

Q 2.—What is it that reincarnates?

Q 3.—What would be the result if the doctrine of reincarnation was accepted by all?

Q 4.—If we have lived before, why do we not remember this?

Q 5.—What is the object of reincarnating?

Q 6.—What is the length of time between each incarnation?

Wise Sayings.

Let us then practice good works, and inspect our thoughts that we do no evil. —Chinese.

The bearer of ill-will towards them that bear ill-will can never become pure; but he who bears no ill-will pacifies them that hate. —Udanavarga.

Let none be forgetful of his own duties for the sake of another. —Dhamapada.

Our deeds whether good or evil follow us like shadows. —Chinese.

Full of love for all things in the world, practicing virtue in order to benefit others—this man only is happy. —Fa-kheu-pi-u.

Better for me to die battling with the tempter, than that I should live defeated. —Padhana-Sutta.

At the end of life the Soul goes forth alone; whereupon only our good deeds befriend us. —Chinese.

A Story For A Child.

Little one, come to my knee !

Hark ! How the rain is pouring
Over the roof, in the pitch-black night,
And the wind in the woods a-roaring.

Hush my darling, and listen,
Then pay for the story with kisses :
Father was lost in the pitch-black night,
In just such a storm as this is :

High upon the lonely mountains,
Where the wild men watched and waited :
Wolves in the forest, and bears in the bush,
And I on my path belated :

The rain and the night together
Came down, and the wind came after,
Bending the props of the pine tree roof,
And snapping many a rafter.

I crept along in the darkness,
Stunned, and bruised, and blinded—
Crept to a fir, with thick-set boughs,
And a sheltering rock behind it.

There, from the blowing and raining
Crouching, I sought to hide me :
Something rustled, two green eyes shone,
And a wolf laid down beside me.

Little one, be not frightened,
I and the wolf together,
Side by side, through the long long night,
Hid from the awful weather.

His wet fur pressed against me :
Each of us warned the other.
Each of us felt, in the stormy dark,
That beast and man was brother.

And when the falling forest
No longer crashed in warning,
Each of us went from our hiding-place,
Forth in the wild, wet morning.

Darling, kiss me payment !
Hark ! how the wind is roaring:
Father's house is a better place
When the stormy rain is pouring !

—*Bayard Taylor.*

The Sentinel.

OAKLAND, CAL.

Oakland has recently organized a Training Class on the same lines as its San Francisco co-workers.

CHICAGO, ILL.

There is a Training Class in Chicago, which within the last few months has brought forward some determined workers.

SANTA CRUZ, CAL.

A Training Class is being organized at Santa Cruz, Cal., and a Lotus Circle is in process of formation.

HONOLULU, H. I.

A Lotus Circle has been formed in Honolulu, the same order of work being carried out as in San Francisco.

TACOMA, WASH.

Mrs. N. C. Sauvagert writes that a Lotus Circle is about to be organized in connection with the Narada Branch, T. S. MERCURY wishes the Circle success.

The H. P. B. Training Class.

On March 24th, 1893, there met at Theosophical Headquarters, 1504 Market Street, San Francisco, thirteen or fourteen students of Theosophy. They came in response to an announcement that a Class would be organized having for its object the training of its members to do Theosophic work.

This first meeting was entirely taken up with preliminary arrangements, and it was not until the meeting of April 27th, following—the Class having determined to meet each week on a Friday evening—that the first paper upon “What is Theosophy” was read, being followed by extemporaneous remarks by all the members present, which order of business has, with few changes, been adhered to since its organization. These remarks upon the different subjects chosen are taken down in shorthand and epitomized by the Secretary, who reads such epitome at the next meeting, according to the rules of the class.

At the first meeting in May, 1893, a system of By-laws was adopted for the purpose of giving the class regular rules to work under and was at this time quite well organized. The officers consist of a President, who serves one month. By this arrangement of so short a term of service every member in their turn has an opportunity to gain the necessary information to properly conduct a meeting. A Secretary is elected for six months.

It is the duty of the President to appoint a Critic at each meeting, who is to criticize without reservation the conduct and general deportment of the speakers and the members. It has become a rule of the class that a selection from some devotional book be read by the President immediately upon calling the meeting to order, after which the Secretary calls the roll and then reads the epitome prepared from the shorthand notes taken at the previous meeting, when the Class proceeds to business.

A Council of five members is elected semi-annually to whom all matters of importance are conveyed for deliberation and decision.

At first, no arrangements were made as to dues, but later

it was decided to ask each member to contribute the sum of twenty-five cents per month, this however, not being compulsory, which money so collected is by the Treasurer of the Class paid over to the Treasurer of the Pacific Coast Committee. This officer is elected for six months at the end of which time a report as to the moneys collected is made.

Such subjects as the following have been taken up and discussed and upon which papers have been written, and epitomes made. Theosophy, Reincarnation, Karma, Brotherhood, the Seven Principles, Modern Science and Theosophy, The Masters, Darwinism and Theosophy, etc.

The subject of Religions has been quite fully discussed by the Class. One of our Brothers has said that, "there is no field more full of food for the inquiring mind than the study of religions. There is good in all; there is truth in all; and Truth is like the ocean which receives the waters of all rivers. Truth contains the good in all aspects of religion."

And it is in this kindly spirit and from this broad standpoint that the members of the H. P. B. Training Class are seeking to gain the necessary information for the dissemination of the teachings of Theosophy.

It is not the object of the Class to attract the many, but to help and encourage the few who are willing to devote part of their time, at least, for the benefit of others. A Master has said: "The instruments are few; more reason for them to be perfect."

One of the most wonderful discoveries in science that has been made within the last year or two is the fact that a beam of light produces sound. According to Milling, a beam of sunlight is thrown through a lens on a glass vessel that contains lampblack, colored silk or worsted, or other substances. A disk, having slits or openings cut in it, is made to revolve swiftly in this beam of light so as to cut it up, thus making alternate flashes of light and shadow. On putting the ear to the glass vessel strange sounds are heard so long as the flashing beam is falling on the vessel.

Editorial.

Many of you, no doubt, have heard the story of the man and his sons and the bundle of sticks which the father used to illustrate the necessity of co-operation to accomplish any great end. He showed his sons how easy it was to break one stick in twain; but when several sticks were bound together it was found almost impossible to rend them. If we shall make a success of this little Magazine devoted to your interests,—which shall spur us on to better and higher ideals—we must work in harmony; we must labor together; we must toil with one purpose, and the kind sympathy which shall go out from every heart and mind engaged in the work will be a power for good that cannot be turned aside by any contending force.

Let us take a lesson from the little, sweet-smelling flowers which grow in the meadows; from the cowslip which raises its little yellow head above the hollow of some animal's hoof imprinted in the soft earth in winter time. Do the flowers regard one another with contempt and jealousy or do they rail against one another if one's head is higher than the rest? Does the Violet complain of the Lily, or the Cowslip laugh when the Morning Glory closes its petals at night?

Our opportunities are so manifold for doing good and “scattering seeds of kindness” that we stop in wonder and think how we might have rendered others happy with just one kind word from the heart, which heals the wound as like a cooling potion. We can see, if we will, the beauty which is inherent in all of us. It may be hid from a casual glance as the rosebud is hid beneath the leaves; but the beauty is there, and like the rosebud it shall see the light. But the rosebud must be nurtured by the sun, the air and the water before it gives out its sweet perfume which charms the senses and becomes to our eye a thing of beauty. So the kindly nature in each of us will blossom as the rose if it be nurtured, and we can be the means which may bring out the good qualities in others and make our own lives full of gladness, and we are just as much a force for good as the woman or man of mature years. Our kind thoughts

form a halo of gladness about those whom we love, and if we are not selfish our love will extend to all mankind. What a power for good we may become!

This little journal is a long felt want supplied; and, like things born of necessity, it will fill its proper place, it being intended as one of the mediums through which Theosophy will be voiced to the young people in whom the Editor feels the deepest interest, for they are as the little rose-buds which will blossom into the flower of humanity—a joy to themselves and to all mankind.

In response to the Notice on the front page of the inside cover, we expect to receive numerous articles and short stories for children and young people. The Theosophical Society has, in its ranks, some very clear and able writers, and we feel assured that they will render all assistance possible in this work.

We propose to publish, from time to time,—and if funds permit, with music—songs adapted for the use of children.

In the next issue will appear a history of the San Francisco “Children’s Hour.”

Meetings.

SAN FRANCISCO.

The Children’s Hour, or Lotus Circle, meets every Sunday morning at 11 o’clock, at Rooms 35 and 36, 1504 Market St. All children are invited.

The H. P. B. Training Class meets every Friday evening at Rooms 35 and 36, 1504 Market St.

Free public lectures are given every Sunday at 7:45 P. M., at Red Men’s Hall, 320 Post St. Strangers and inquirers earnestly invited.

OAKLAND.

Free public lectures on Theosophical subjects every Sunday at 3 P. M., at Odd Fellows’ Hall, cor. 11th & Franklin St.

Reviews.

PATH. (June.)

A very able article on Astrology, with timely suggestions, for him who will help to redeem the lost good name of the noble science from the hands of pretenders and charlatans.

"Lodges of Magic," will repay a perusal, especially by the indolent (mentally) and curiosity seeker. What a vast amount of work the latter would be able to perform by setting his energies in other directions. "Mystery of the Moon" still remains a mystery. *Path* is largely taken up with correspondence and reviews.

T. P. S. (Vol. VII.)

T. P. S. reprints a splendid article from the pen of that eminent scholar, A. Wilder, on "Life Eternal."

THEOSOPHIST. (May.)

"Old Diary Leaves XXVI," open with an account of the brief but unpleasant connection of the T. S. with the Arya Samaj, and the inevitable disruption that followed. That the two organizations continue to exist is an evidence that there is room for all, but only for one Theosophical Society. The tribute of Col. Olcott to the good bishop Bigaudet is worthy of attention, and clearly shows the spirit that animates him who endeavors to shape his life in the light of Theosophy.

The article on transmigration will bear careful reading

and a good deal of sifting. We notice that Brother S. Ryden, late of San Francisco, has been appointed by the President a member of the Staff at Headquarters.

LUCIFER. (May).

The Watchman of the Watchtower is up late and early keeping a faithful watch over passing events having any relation with Theosophical work. "Religions of Ancient Greece and Rome" is a scholarly presentation of what is and has been very much misunderstood. Fiat Lux writes in a sarcastic humor, seemingly impatient at the obtruseness of other people. "There is no Third Dimension" lays down the law with a vengeance.

"Moulds of Mind" is a timely article, and should be taken like spring medicine. The tendency to look up for authoritative statements in matters of religion and in the domain of science is strong.

Members of the T. S. would do well to remember not to accept anything upon authority—even in Theosophical literature, thus preventing crystalization, curing mental indolence, and sharpening the analytical powers.

The now published letters of Eliphaz Levi are instructive, and if the few thousands that are to follow will prove as valuable as the preceding ones, the renowned Kabbalist will have given much food for thought.